



## Studies in Visual Communication

---

Volume 6  
Issue 2 *Summer 1980*

Article 3

---

1980

### Robert Flaherty / Photographer

Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker

---

#### Recommended Citation

Danzker, J. B. (1980). Robert Flaherty / Photographer. 6 (2), 5-32. Retrieved from <https://repository.upenn.edu/svc/vol6/iss2/3>

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. <https://repository.upenn.edu/svc/vol6/iss2/3>  
For more information, please contact [repository@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:repository@pobox.upenn.edu).

---

Robert Flaherty / Photographer



**Robert Flaherty/Photographer**

**Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker**

---





Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker is curator of The Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, B.C. She arranged the Robert J. Flaherty Photographer/Filmmaker exhibition and compiled the exhibition catalog.

Photograph on preceding page

# Figure 1

Cat. No. 29

vintage photogravure, on loan from FSCC (the photogravures had fairly wide distribution and are in a number of private and public collections).

N 150

8¾" × 6½" / 22.4 × 16.3 cm

subject: portrait of woman, 1913–1914, Baffin Island.

identification: *Allegoo (Shining Water) Sikoslingmuit Eskimo Woman, Southern Baffin Land*. Flaherty 9, 12. The photograph was also published in a Toronto newspaper in March 1915 with the caption *Our little lady of the snows at the left makes a most engaging picture* (Flaherty 3), indicating it was taken in 1914 or earlier. The identification however has been disputed.

Peter Pitseolak identified the subject of this photograph for NPA/M and Eber as *Kanajuq (Kanajuk) Aeojiealia\**. This was confirmed by Nipisha, her half sister and by Etungat, her half brother.

note: According to Eber's informants Kanajuq (Kanajuk), which means 'devil fish' or sculpin, was the daughter of Ishuhangitok and one of his wives Nipisha (Nipeecha). She married Kootoo of Lake Harbour. Her son is Rev. Timothy Kalai, the Anglican clergyman in Cape Dorset. See also No.45/N 2103; No.55/N 201; No.58/N 203. Eber 2.

## "The question is of course one of establishing identity."<sup>1</sup>

While the films of Robert Flaherty have been analyzed, and disputed, in great detail, virtually no consideration has been given to a collection of nearly 1,500 photographs which he produced before and during production of *Nanook of the North* (1922). Most of these photographs, taken primarily in the Canadian sub-Arctic between 1910 and 1921, have survived only the form of fragile glass plates, slides, or nitrate negatives, deposited by Flaherty's widow in 1972 with the Robert and Frances Flaherty Study Center at the School of Theology, Claremont, California.

Flaherty often gave his photographs to both his subjects and his friends. Most of these vintage prints, however, have been lost. Two almost identical vintage albums have been located, one in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum, in Toronto, and the other at the Thunder Bay Historical Museum. Other than six photographs from the Medland Collection in the Public Archives of Canada, National Photography Collection, Ottawa, and some vintage prints reputedly still in the Arctic, virtually all the vintage and modern prints as well as the negatives are to be found at the School of Theology in Claremont.

Examination of these photographs has been facilitated by the extensive work carried out by the Center's director, Dr. Jack Coogan, and his assistant, John Nelson. This work, completed in the spring of 1979, involved rephotographing the images on safety film and providing roughly cataloged contact sheets. These contact sheets were broken down into four groupings: N (*Nanook*) 1–383 and N 2001–2822; C (*Canada*) 1–148; G (*Geology*) 1–55; and OL (*On the Laddie*) 1–153.

In April 1979, the author began working with the contact sheets in preparation for an exhibition at The Vancouver Art Gallery (December 1, 1979 to January 13, 1980). It was realized that most of the photographs predated *Nanook of the North*, some by more than ten years; that some had in fact been taken in British Columbia; and, surprisingly, that hand-written inscriptions on vintage prints were often misdated.

The finest of the photographs were portraits of the Inuit. These striking images demanded to be identified: Who were the subjects, and what was their relationship to Robert Flaherty?

Several attempts to identify the Inuit portraits had already been made by Flaherty's daughter, Monica Flaherty Frassetto. Flaherty Frassetto had previously researched and identified photographs taken by her mother, Frances Hubbard Flaherty, during the production of *Moana* in Samoa. Her attempts to duplicate these efforts with the Inuit portraits proved more difficult. In 1974 Flaherty Frassetto (1979) sent copies of the photographs for circulation in the North. The disappointing response, however, indicated that the gathering of information about the photographs could be carried out only in the Arctic. Flaherty Frassetto therefore enlisted the assist-



**Figure 2**

Cat. No. 75

modern print, from  
original glass plate, by  
NPC, on loan from FSCC.  
N 344

5" × 7" / 12.7 × 17.8 cm

subject: photograph of  
*Nastapoka*.

identification: *The Wreck of the "Nastapoka": This little 36-foot schooner went aground, bringing Mr. Flaherty's first expedition to the Belcher Islands to a sudden end. She was hauled off and returned to Great Whale River, without reaching the Belchers.* Flaherty 10.  
(caption for similar photograph).

note: The *Nastapoka* ran aground off the Gulf Hazard mainland in September, 1911, and the Belcher Islands, July, 1916.



ance of Dorothy Harley Eber, of Montreal, who co-authored *People from Our Side* with the well-known Inuit artist Peter Pitseolak. Pitseolak, who as a young boy met Flaherty on Baffin Island in 1914, identified a number of the Inuit portraits for Eber (Pitseolak and Eber 1975). These identifications, however, conflicted with those assigned by Flaherty.

Eber, during later visits to Baffin Island, collected identifications for a number of the portraits. This research was published in the January 1979 issue of *Natural History* (Eber 1979) and, with additions and corrections, in the Vancouver Art Gallery exhibition catalog (Danzker 1979). Although some of the identifications were confirmed by more than one source, the passage of time and family similarities made further corroboration difficult. It became increasingly clear that the preparation of an accurate chronology of Flaherty's travel in the North would become essential not only to identifying but also to locating and dating the images.

For further explanation of abbreviations and sources for identification of these photographs see *Photographic References*, page 31.

**Chronology**

Comparison of diary entries and unpublished manuscripts stored in the Robert J. Flaherty Papers at Butler Library, Columbia University, with published material revealed that published chronologies were marred by inaccuracies, even when they had been authorized by Robert and/or Frances Flaherty.

One obvious, and surprising, example occurred during the dating of photographs taken in British Columbia. A vintage print in the Claremont collection had been variously inscribed:

Rob—playing his beloved violin into the vastness. Vancouver 10 years ago.

and

Camp—Vancouver Island. Head of Tahsis Canal. c. 1913.

Frances Flaherty had indicated to Arthur Calder-Marshall (1963:16), during the writing of *The Innocent Eye: The Life of Robert J. Flaherty*, that she had visited Flaherty in British Columbia in the summer of 1906. The Butler Library diaries, however, and correspondence in the Claremont Archives between Frances Flaherty and a close friend, Margaret Thurston, indicated that she visited Flaherty in Ontario in 1906 and in British Columbia in 1908.



It was also discovered that much of the information contained in *My Eskimo Friends*, written by Robert and Frances Flaherty (1924), was inconsistent with original source documents. This book had been considered an accurate autobiographical account of Flaherty's travel in the Canadian sub-Arctic from 1910 to 1921, and on a number of occasions excerpts from it were used in the preparation of biographies. It had also been utilized in reviewing his early practice as a filmmaker and in describing his relationship to the Inuit. The image of Flaherty and of the Inuit contained in *My Eskimo Friends*, an essential part of the mythology of Robert Flaherty the filmmaker, was now brought into question.

### Figure 3

Cat. No. 81

modern print from original glass plate, by NPC, on loan from FSCC.

N 2233

4" × 6¼" / 10.2 × 15.9 cm

subject: photograph of land formation, undated, unlocated.

### Flaherty as Photographer

It proved surprisingly difficult to locate published references to Flaherty's photographs. Only one brief mention of photography was made in *My Eskimo Friends* (p. 17), and that referred to geological documentation.

Only a small number of Flaherty's photographs have been published (most of them between 1918 and 1924), to illustrate articles written by Flaherty for geographical journals (1918), or newspapers,<sup>2</sup> and *My Eskimo Friends*. A portfolio of photogravures, *Camera Studies of the Far North*, was published in 1922 by Revillon Frères to promote *Nanook of the North*.

Once *Nanook* had been released, Flaherty's overwhelming interest was in its distribution and promotion. Probably for this reason, most of the photographs selected for publication (12 of 20 photographs in *Camera Studies of the Far North*,<sup>3</sup> 1922, and 9 of 12 photographs in *My Eskimo Friends*, 1924) were unexceptional, though pleasantly theatrical, production shots for *Nanook of the North* rather than photographic studies in their own right.

Later publications, especially biographies of Flaherty—*The World of Robert Flaherty* (Griffith 1953); *The Innocent Eye* (Calder-Marshall 1963); and even *The Odyssey of a Film-Maker* (F. Flaherty 1960)—made no mention of Flaherty's early photographic work, and the only images reproduced were the standard *Nanook* production and promotion shots. During production of Flaherty's later films (*Moana*, *Man of Aran*, *Louisiana Story*) photography





was carried out almost exclusively by Frances Hubbard Flaherty, although the images have often been published under Robert Flaherty's name.

Because of the specific use made of both Robert and Frances Flaherty's photographs (to serve in the production or publicizing of Flaherty's films), they have rarely been considered or maintained as works of art in their own right. Nevertheless, before 1922, some of Flaherty's photographs (especially his portraits of the Inuit) were considered by both Flahertys to be a significant part of his artistic production.

### The Early Years

In a recent interview, Frances Ruttan (Flaherty's sister) recalled that Flaherty displayed great interest in photography from an early age:

He took pictures of everybody, his friends, everybody. He would take them downtown [Port Arthur] at the ice cream parlour, or anywhere. It was a big camera on a tripod, which was awkward to carry in those days. He was never without a camera as he grew up and got to be 17, 18, 19 years old. I guess my father got it for him. My father had one, he might have used my father's.<sup>4</sup>

During his early twenties (1904–1908) Flaherty traveled extensively in Canada, gaining experience as explorer, surveyor, and prospector. Probably, like his colleagues, he carried a camera. In fact, some of the earliest surviving photographs form part of a journal kept by Flaherty in the summer and fall of 1906 while he was prospecting around Long Lake and Lake Nipigon, in Ontario.<sup>5</sup>

It is, however, not until the summer of 1908, when Frances Hubbard visited Flaherty on Vancouver Island, that both Robert and Frances Flaherty began to systematically document their travel. In 1910, Sir William Mackenzie commissioned Flaherty to explore the Nastapoka Islands off the east coast of Hudson Bay for iron ore deposits. This expedition was to locate Flaherty squarely within one of the most exciting and politicized areas of expedition and geological research. From 1900 to 1910, Arctic exploration had acquired political significance as Canada attempted to establish its northern boundaries and to settle its Alaska boundary dispute with the United States. Photographic documentation from these expeditions was produced not only for historical records but also as proof of possession.

Arctic exploration had economic as well as political significance. Since the 1880s, prairie governments as well as railway financiers like Sir William Mackenzie had hoped that Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait could be utilized almost year-round to ship Western products to foreign markets. It was also hoped that a Hudson Bay route would result in the expansion and development of mining and resource industries in the Hudson Bay area.

Robert Flaherty was one of a number of geologists and explorers who verified that year-round navigation was impossible and that the mineral deposits were commercially not viable. Two leading geologists had preceded Flaherty into the area—Robert Bell and Albert Peter Low. Flaherty acknowledged his familiarity with their expeditions and their reports on a number of occasions (Flaherty 1918; Flaherty and Flaherty 1924). Both Bell and Low, besides being distinguished geologists, were also important pioneer photographers in the Canadian Arctic. Bell, in particular, as director of the Geological Survey, was committed to publishing photographs from major expeditions as widely as possible. He wrote and lectured extensively, illustrating his topic with glass slides.

It was not until 1903–1904 that an expedition, under the command of A. P. Low, established winter quarters and lived in the North for several months. Increased contact between southern expeditionary personnel and local Inuit communities led to significant change in the photographic documentation brought back by the expedition.

Low in particular succeeds in taking the viewer right into the privacy of the igloos and among their occupants. They took photographs everywhere: on the *Neptune*, aboard the *Era*, in the police post. Not only do these photographs give an idea of the makeup of the native population in the village at the time, but they also portray individual Inuit of the village with special prominence, particularly those distinguished by their social standing or their hunting skill. In fact, being chosen to be photographed was considered a token of esteem that enhanced the image and importance of Inuit associated with the expedition within their own communities. [Burant et al. 1979:74]

When Robert Flaherty arrived at the Hudson's Bay post at Great Whale on Christmas Day, 1910, carrying a Kodak camera (Murphy 1978:4), he was about to follow a well-established tradition of using photography to verify geological formations and to record aspects of life in the North. Within a few weeks his work had begun.

Breaking off rock samples here and there and taking close-up photographs in the acid month of January [1911, on the Nastapoka Islands] were not pleasant tasks. [Flaherty and Flaherty 1924]

Coincidentally, one of Flaherty's Inuit assistants (whom he photographed), was Nero, from Great Whale. Nero had also accompanied Low in 1896 in an unsuccessful attempt to traverse the Ungava Peninsula (successfully completed by Flaherty in March 1912 with an Inuit hunter, Omarolluk).<sup>6</sup>

Initially Flaherty photographed, as had many others, the more superficial aspects of expeditionary life—the boats which transported him north, life in the settlements and fur trading posts, the landscape and animal life, and, of course, his southern and Inuit companions. While



**Figure 4**

Cat. No. 67

modern print, from  
original glass plate, by  
NPC, on loan from FSCC.

N 2300

5" × 7" / 12.7 × 17.8 cm

subject: photograph of  
Inuit woman cooking on  
modern stove, probably  
1913–1914, Baffin Island.note: hair style and dress  
would suggest Baffin  
Island (MacDonald,  
Zimmerly). The cooking  
facilities would suggest  
either larger settlements  
like Cape Dorset or Lake  
Harbour or perhaps  
Flaherty's own settlement  
at Eteenik. (See  
*Chronology* September  
27, 1913).**Figure 5**

Cat. No. 70

modern print, from  
original glass plate, by  
NPC, on loan from FSCC.

N 2477

7" × 5" / 17.8 × 12.7 cm

subject: photograph of  
woman carrying bundles  
of wood and basket,  
undated, unlocated.



Flaherty did continue to take these more "documentary" photographs, during later expeditions (1911–1916) his camera was increasingly directed toward his Inuit companions.

### Flaherty and the Inuit

A large number of Flaherty's photographs of the Inuit are ethnographic and resemble photographs from earlier expeditions. They focus on forms of dress, decoration, and modes of hunting. One photograph of Inuit children (Burant et al. 1979) is similar to another taken during the 1903–1904 expedition under the command of Low.<sup>7</sup>

Flaherty is often described as a Romantic, a naïve idealist who avoided documenting social and political inequalities as well as the conditions of his own time. Both *Nanook of the North* and *Man of Aran* were strongly criticized for emphasizing and romanticizing the past rather than confronting the present. Several photographs, however, serve to demonstrate that Flaherty was acutely aware of the rapid and radical technological and cultural changes which the Inuit were undergoing. One is of an Inuit woman cooking on a large modern stove (Burant et al. 1979); a second is perhaps the only photograph which comes close to an overt political statement by Flaherty (within the documentary tradition defined by Grierson). It records a group of Inuit inside a church with a sign on the wall:

Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand. [Ibid.:2, 88]

Rooted in the social, cultural, and economic condition of the Inuit as Flaherty met them, such photographs shatter any myth of his naïveté.

As Flaherty's intimacy with the Inuit increased, his camera began to locate and isolate the personality of his companions rather than their exotic lifestyle and modes of dress. One such early portrait is that of Omarolluk (ibid.:16, 86), who guided him across the Ungava Peninsula. Simeonie Kopapik, of Cape Dorset, who was a small boy during Flaherty's visit in 1914, recalls the portrait-taking sessions:

They had to take them inside, in Flaherty's house. I don't recall them having flashes with the camera. They used kerosene lanterns; and I remember three lanterns being placed in special places on the wall. I remember a camera with a cloth that had to go over the head. Maybe that was because they had to prevent any light coming to the photographer's vision. It took a long time before the photographer could actually take a picture. They couldn't take a picture of a person as soon as he sat down. They had to relax him first. The man sitting on the chair had to be very relaxed. . . . if he was liable to move at all they couldn't take his picture. That's what I remember. [Eber 1979]

### Figure 6

Cat. No. 61

modern print, from original glass slide, by NPC, on loan from FSCC.

N 2513

5" × 3½" / 12.7 × 8.9 cm

subject: photograph of man, probably 1915–1916, Belcher Islands.

identification: A Belcher Islander Eskimo in eider duck costume. Feathers outside. Flaherty 4.









**Figure 7**

Cat. No. 69

modern print, from original glass plate, by NPC, on loan from FSCC. N 2734

7" x 5" / 17.8 x 12.7 cm

subject: photograph of Inuit in church.

note: as only a larger community would have a church of this size, MacDonald suggested it could be at Lake Harbour (confirmed by Copland). Bishop Fleming was minister at Lake Harbour and according to Mrs. Fleming, serious disputes arose between Fleming and Flaherty, although this did not emerge in Fleming's autobiography. (Eber).

Rosemary Donegan located a similar photograph attributed to Flaherty in *The Canadian Courier*, Vol.X, No.22, October 28, 1911, p.6, with the caption: "The Esquimaux are the most northerly citizens of the Dominion and this picture is evidence that

*the missionary finds them willing to learn. This photograph was taken in a little church on the Ungava shore of Hudson Bay."*

This would date the photograph from the first Mackenzie expedition of 1910-1911.

This is perhaps the only one of Flaherty's photographs to have political connotations.

**The Portraits: Studio-Type and Confrontation**

Flaherty's Inuit portraits fall naturally into two categories. The first could be termed "studio-type." These portraits, which tend to be in the minority, closely reflect both painting and photographic conventions of the nineteenth century. The subjects are carefully posed, side-lit, occasionally in profile, and their eyes rarely meet the camera.

While these photographs have an immediate appeal, they never acquire the sheer force of the photographs in the second category, "confrontation." In the confrontation portraits the viewer is literally confronted, through direct eye contact, by the subject. The camera is close, inside the intimate space of the subjects who face us, without the protection of a camera identity, in dignity. It is in these portraits that Flaherty the photographer comes closest to the achievement of Flaherty the filmmaker.

**The Portraits: Dating**

Flaherty often gave his photographs away, both to his subjects<sup>8</sup> and to his friends and family.<sup>9</sup> One such friend was Frances Emily Baubie, who met Flaherty one summer while he was visiting his family in Port Arthur (Thunder Bay). The six photographs (all portraits) given to her by Flaherty were carefully stored, and, after her death, donated by her daughter, Mrs. M. A. Medland, to the National Photography Collection, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

Frances Emily Baubie or Flaherty himself had inscribed several dates on the back of the photographs: 1904 (which is chronologically incorrect), August 1912 corrected to 1913 (the most probable date), and 1914 (again incorrect). The dates suggest that a number of the striking confrontation portraits which make up the core of this exhibition most likely predate Flaherty's first film in 1914 and certainly predate *Nanook of the North* by at least seven years.



### The Photographs: Public Presentation

It would appear that the first and possibly only formal public presentation of Robert Flaherty's photographs took place at the Arts and Letters Club in Toronto the week of January 3, 1915.<sup>10</sup> Flaherty had returned triumphantly from his third northern expedition. During the winter of 1914–1915 on Baffin Island, he had taken a number of very fine portraits and produced his first film. On his way south, he had also "rediscovered" the Belcher Islands and brought back a large number of artifacts and drawings for the Eskimo collection of the newly inaugurated Royal Ontario Museum, in Toronto.

The first public presentation of his film took place on March 30, 1915, in Convocation Hall at the University of Toronto. The presentation also included some of the Inuit portraits, as can be seen from the outline of the lecture presentation:

Story of N's wife, introducing  
D. Dramatis personae: portraits and anecdotes.<sup>11</sup>

Most of the reviews in the Toronto newspapers focused on the "motion pictures" but one, in *The Evening Telegram*, referred to the portraits:

Besides the moving pictures there were some excellent portraits of artistic excellence depicting types of this remote people.<sup>12</sup>



**Figure 8**

Cat. No. 73

modern print, from original glass plate, by NPC, on loan from FSCC.

N 2459

5" × 4" / 12.7 × 10.2 cm

subject: photograph of two women and child, probably 1913–1914, Baffin Island.

note: dress would suggest Baffin Island (MacDonald, Zimmerly).



## Flaherty in New York: Curtis and Stieglitz

Immediately following the presentation at Convocation Hall, the Flahertys went to New York to find a distributor for the 1914 film. While at the office of Lee Keedick (Sir Douglas Mawson's agent) they decided to visit Edward Curtis. Frances Flaherty recorded the visit in her diary:<sup>13</sup>

Much crest-fallen, to console ourselves, we stopped in at Curtis's studio on the same floor. We were shown the portfolio of photogravures for the 10th volume of Mr. Curtis's colossal work on the North American Indian,—500 sets at \$4200. and \$3500 per set.—his life work and one to stir the imagination. The same thought crossed our minds at once: why not the same for the Eskimo? . . .

We made comparison between his portraits and R's: Indian portraits—flat, toneless quality of drawing, interest decorative, and dependent upon picturesque costumes and other details.

Eskimo portraits—depth and tone quality of painting, interest centering in personality independent of race, costume, or detail of any kind.

On the whole the Eskimo portraits where "bigger"; the question in my mind was whether Curtis was a big enough man to interest himself in R's work.

Curtis was interested, apparently in the 1914 film, and Frances Flaherty's entry in her diary following their meeting makes no mention of the portraits.

A few weeks later the Flahertys visited Alfred Stieglitz at "291." This meeting was obviously an important one for them. The entry in Frances Flaherty's diary reads:<sup>14</sup>

Red Letter Day! Visit to "291." While I slept yesterday afternoon R. went to Brentano's and came back with an armful of photography periodicals, filling our room with treasure. Of the lot the pearl of great price, reverently displayed with all the pride of a new discover, was *Camera Work*, edited by Alfred Stieglitz. We forthwith resolved to see Mr. Stieglitz, hence our pilgrimage to "#291", a little old building on Fifth Ave., the ground floor of which was given to the sights and smells of a 3d Ave. back alley, bearing out R's impression that "they were a bohemian lot, anarchists and all that, ultra-modern."

The visit turned out to be a mountain peak experience for me. I look back on it now with worship in my heart. Bare walls and scant furnishing, a few pictures, a few prints—but the place is hallowed, for there is Reality and Truth and Soul, Love and the Labour of Love, and the deep spirit of Rest. And the spirit of the place is the Man: I saw him in a golden aura. It was all so simple; we began immediately talking about *Camera Work*; he beckoned, leading us on into this mind, to see the priceless labor and love he has put into it. It is the record of the birth and development of photography as an art, as a medium for expressing the soul in things, in the work of the great photographers from the time of D. O. Hill. Our eyes were shining with the reflection of this enthusiasm, and I was bursting with impatience to go get our portraits and bring them into the magic of this hour,—I was sure of their welcome. R. went, I staid. We talked of this and that; it was not so much the subject, it was the sympathy. We talked of the City, of our dissipated energies. He too is an apostle of concentration, it

is the motive of his life and work, his message and his mission. How well I understood the way he spoke of his student years in Germany and the utter misery of the first years of his struggle here, against ill-health, with his work, the intense, body-shattering excitement of it: and then, little by little, the gathering of the thirsty about him, himself the spring in that oasis of the great American desert of mediocrity and commercialism. Our conversation became almost as one thought, we took the words from each others mouth.

R. came back. Mr. S. looked over the drawings and the portraits with interest and appreciation and words of kindly encouragement.

Two little shining souls (at least mine was) went back to the city streets, with two large autograph copies of *Camera Work* tucked under their arms. And what had he said to R's expostulation at the gift, but: "You don't know what YOU have done for ME this morning"(!), and wrote: "To Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Flaherty, as a souvenir of a very Real and Live Hour at 291."

Despite the Flahertys' interest in developing and promoting the Inuit portraits in 1915, their attention was turning increasingly toward film. Their aspiration to produce a major portfolio of photogravures on the scale of Curtis's *The North American Indian* was to result in the small and uneven *Camera Studies of the Far North* (1922).



**Figure 9**

Cat. No. 35

modern print, from original nitrate negative, by NPC, on loan from FSCC.

N 2088

6½" × 4½" / 16.5 × 11.4 cm

subject: portrait of man, probably 1911–1912, Ungava Peninsula.

identification: *Omarolluk, the head driver on the sledge expedition*. Flaherty 5.note: Flaherty was the first non-Inuit to successfully traverse and explore the Northern Ungava Peninsula. He was accompanied by Wetunik and Omarolluk, a famous hunter from Hope's Welcome, on whom he was dependent for his survival. The journey was made in March–April, 1912. See *Chronology*.Omarolluk has accompanied Flaherty to the Belcher Islands in 1915. See *Chronology*, Note 53.**Figure 10**

Cat. No. 53

modern print, from original glass plate, by NPC, on loan from FSCC.

N 2512

7" × 5" / 17.8 × 12.7 cm

subject: portrait of woman, probably 1913–1914, Baffin Island.

note: both the hair style and the glass beading would suggest Baffin Island (MacDonald, Zimmerly).





**Figure 11**

Cat. No. 32

vintage photogravure, on loan from FSCC (see No. 29).

N 205

8½" × 6" / 21.6 × 15.3 cm

subject: portrait of girl, probably 1913–1914, Baffin Island.

identification: *Cunayou (The Sculpin) Sikoslingmuit Eskimo Girl, Southern Baffin Land. Flaherty 9. Narlaq.\* Eber 2.*

note: Cunayou is a corruption of Kanajuq ('devil fish' or sculpin). Thus, while Flaherty identified this photograph as Kanajuq/Cunayou, Peter Pitseolak (and Kanajuq's half brother and sister) identified No. 29/N 150 as Kanajuq, and this photograph as Narlaq, who is the daughter of Mai (see Eber 1) and Kovianatok. This identification has been confirmed by Narlaq's adoptive brother, Simeonie Kopapik, Cape Dorset; her daughter, Ooloosie Lyta, Lake Harbour; Pudlo Pudlat, Cape Dorset and Ekidluak (Ikidluak), Lake Harbour.

**Figure 12**

Cat. No. 17

vintage print, on loan from TBHM (also in collection of ROM, and published in *Camera Studies of the Far North*, 1922).

972. 255. 175 I, N 2076

8" × 6" / 20.3 × 15.3 cm

subject: portrait of man, probably 1912, Fort Chimo.

note: portrait of Naskapi Indian. Flaherty met Naskapi Indians at Fort Chimo, 1912.

The same person appears in N 2075.





**Figure 13**

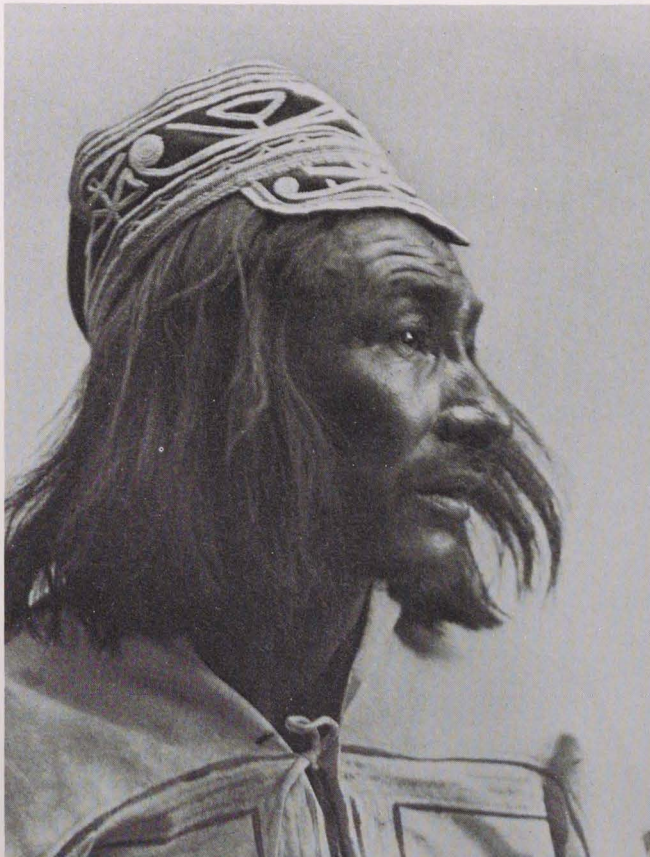
Cat. No. 31

vintage photogravure, on loan from FSCC (see No. 29).

N 152

8¾" × 6¾" / 21.4 × 17.1 cm

subject: portrait of man, probably 1912, Fort Chimo.

identification: *Nascaupie, Indian Chief, Northern Labrador*, Flaherty 9, 12.note: Flaherty described meeting Naskapi Indians in Fort Chimo, June, 1912. See *Chronology*.**Figure 14**

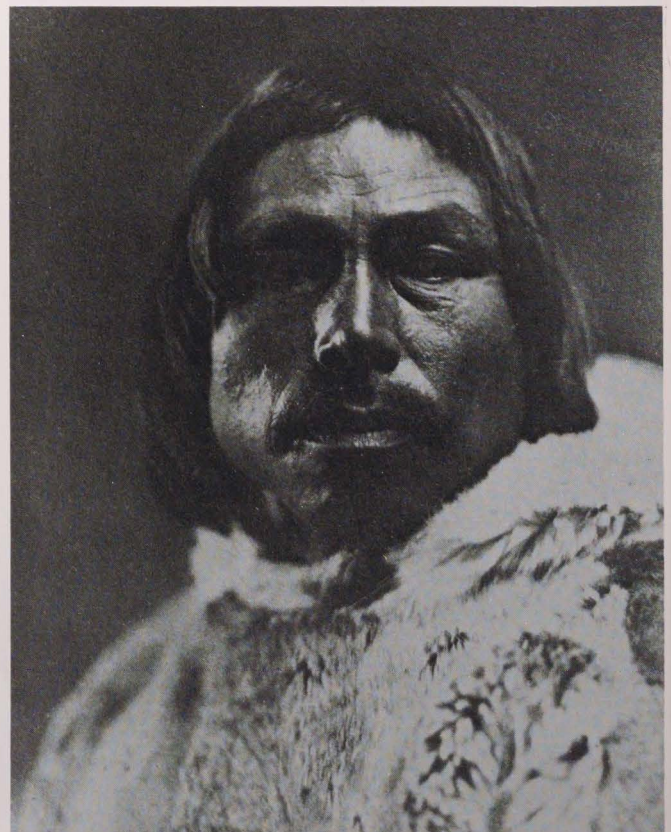
Cat. No. 30

vintage photogravure, on loan from FSCC (see No. 29).

N 151

8¾" × 6½" / 21.4 × 16.5 cm

subject: portrait of man, 1913–1914, Baffin Island.

identification: *Tooktoo (The Deer). Chief of Sikoslingmuit Eskimos. Southern Baffin Land*. Flaherty 9, 12. The photograph was also published in a Toronto newspaper in March, 1915, indicating that it was taken in 1914 or earlier. The identification however has been disputed.Peter Pitseolak identified the subject of this photograph as *Anumniuk (Aningmiuk, Arnieniuk) Seegoaigh\** for NPA/M and Eber. This was confirmed by his son Peter Aningmiuk and his daughter Anirnik.note: Anumniuk was a famed hunter who made many journeys on the whaler *Active*, and killed three blue whales. In the early 30's he regularly piloted the *Nascaupie* around Amadjuak. Both his daughter Anirnik and son Peter Aningmiuk were born on the *Active*.Peter Pitseolak photographed him (see page 33 of *People from our side*, where he is incorrectly identified as his son in some editions). Eber 2.Flaherty recorded meeting the *Active* in August, 1914 (*My Eskimo Friends*, page 37) and Frances Flaherty travelled on the *Nascaupie* around Amadjuak in October, 1915. It is not known, however, if they met Anumniuk at that time. Flaherty most likely met Anumniuk during his stay in Amadjuak in 1913–1914.It is also likely that Bob Stewart (No. 115, N 378) knew Anumniuk from the time that Stewart sailed on the *Active*.



**Figure 15**

Cat. No. 21

vintage print, on loan from TBHM (also in collection of ROM).

972. 255. 175 U, N 2096, N 2433

6" × 8" / 15.3 × 20.3 cm

subject: portrait of man, probably 1913–1914, Baffin Island.

identification: the subject of this photograph was identified as *Enutsiak (Innutsiak)\** by his son, Amaitok Ipellie, Frobisher Bay. Eber 2.note: Enutsiak came as a boy from Arctic Quebec to Baffin Island in 1908. Peter Pitseolak recalled meeting him on Nottingham Island in *People from our side* (pages 69, 72). Pitseolak photographed him in later life wearing workman's overalls. He died in his eighties, famous for carvings of little groups depicting childbirth, prayer meetings and wrestling. Eber 2.**Figure 16**

Cat. No. 33

vintage photogravure, on loan from FSCC (see No. 29).

N 206

8¾" × 6½" / 22.4 × 16.3 cm

subject: portrait of woman, probably 1913–1914, Baffin Island.

identification: *Allego (glass)\** despite the fact that Flaherty identified No. 29/N 150 as Allegoo, Peter Pitseolak identified the subject of this photograph to Eber as Allego. This was confirmed by Pitseolala Kelly, Frobisher Bay. Eber 1, 2. Simeonie Kopapik identified her as Seereseekok although the NPA/M does not regard the identification as positive.note: according to Eber's informants (Ulayu Pingwartok and Mumamee Shaa), Allego was a darkroom assistant for Flaherty. It is recommended in Dorset that in good weather Allego, Kanajuq (see No. 29) and Kingnatchia would sit outside with Flaherty's gramophone. She was probably living with Noogooshoweetok (No. 36/N 176) at the time but later moved away with an older man from a northern region. She returned many years later with very beautiful tattoos, shaman's powers and the fire and seaweed as helping spirits. She married Alariak, another shaman, and they became famous South Baffin shamans. Allego and Alariak also posed for the camera of Peter Pitseolak (see *People from our side*, page 28). Allego eventually left Alariak and went to Churchill where she was trampled to death by intoxicated people around 1957. Eber 1, 2.



**Figure 17**

Cat. No. 68

modern print, from  
original nitrate negative,  
by NPC, on loan from  
FSCC.

N 2117

5" x 7" / 12.7 x 17.8 cm

subject: photograph of  
children, probably  
Ungava Peninsula.

note: this photograph is not unlike one by A. P. Low in 1903-1904, "Inuit children at Fullerton, NWT" (PA-53577), National Photography Collection, Ottawa. The dress and use of shawls would suggest the Ungava Peninsula.





## The Photographs and the Films

A number of the Inuit portraits which Flaherty took after 1913 were related to the production of his films. Noogoo-shweetok (Burant et al. 1979:10, 86), for example, played a major role in the 1914 film, as did Allegoo (ibid.:27, 86), who was also a darkroom assistant (Eber 1979). Both were the subjects of two of Flaherty's finest portraits.

Flaherty used an Inuit drawing in preparing a script for his 1914 film (Burant et al. 1979:9, 60, 61), but it would appear from examination of his photographs that it was not until 1920 and *Nanook of the North* that he began to use his own photographs as a production device.

A considerable number of the photographs taken during the production of *Nanook* are filmic time studies of snow storms, harpooning, and kayaking. It also appears that various aspects of Inuit life were photographed, then considered for a script. (It is also possible that the photographs were staged after shooting, as production and promotion shots.)

Coward, the Canadian manager of Revillon Frères, visited Port Harrison during 1920–1921 and collected a number of Inuit portraits in an album presently stored in the Norman Photographic Archives, McCord Museum, McGill University, Montreal. Monica Flaherty Frassetto has suggested that they are Flaherty's. No negatives or similar prints are cataloged by the Robert and Frances Flaherty Study Center in Claremont, the Royal Ontario Museum, or Thunder Bay Historical Museum, which suggests that they were not taken by him. Nevertheless, the photographs are not similar to others taken by Coward, and it is known that Coward (who photographed Flaherty filming *Nanook of the North*) met and probably worked with Flaherty. There is a possibility that the photographs were taken by Bob Stewart. According to Dudley Copland, a former Hudson's Bay post factor who lived in the North for many years:

I believe that Bob Stewart [Revillon Frères factor, Inoucdjouac, 1920–1921] bought the camera from Flaherty and copied Flaherty's technique. There is a striking "sameness" about the studio-type photographs which Flaherty took and those taken by Bob Stewart. [Ibid.:57,90]

If the photographs from this album are by Flaherty, we are able to observe that many of the portraits from 1920–1921 are not so striking as those from earlier expeditions. Certainly the portraits of Nanook and Nyla (definitely taken by Flaherty) are largely undistinguished and convey little of the presence that both project on film. One is also aware in examining the photographs that both Nanook and Nyla have developed camera personalities. Gone is the unself-conscious confrontation with the camera of the early portraits.



**Figure 18**

Cat. No. 44

modern print, from original glass plate, by NPC, on loan from FSCC.

N 2089

7" × 5" / 17.8 × 12.7 cm

subject: portrait of man, probably 1913–1914, Baffin Island.

identification: see No. 37, N 187, possibly *Ezechiak*,\* a son of Anumnuq Seegoaigh, No. 30, N 151, according to Ekidluak, Lake Harbour. Eber 2.

note: Ezechiak was the father of Saggiaktok, a craftsman at the printmaking shop in Cape Dorset. Eber 2.



## Conclusion

Research into Flaherty's photographs raised several issues which are relevant to consideration of any photographic and indeed filmic documentation of people exotic to ourselves:

- 1 The use and exchange value of the images, for both the photographer and the subject
- 2 The moral responsibility of the photographer to his or her subject
- 3 The "objectivity" or "authenticity" of the image and the intrinsically exclusive rather than inclusive nature of the photographic and filmic frame

## The Use and Exchange Value of the Image

We referred earlier to the exchange value of photographic portraits for the Inuit:

... being chosen to be photographed was considered a token of esteem that enhanced the image and importance of Inuit associated with the expedition within their own communities. [Ibid.]

We also referred to the way in which numerous expeditions photographed local Inuit as part of a documenting, mapping process which gave proof of possession over territory. This was particularly important at a time when different nations were laying claim, or disputing claims, to the same territory. Flaherty's more documentary-type photographs clearly lie within this tradition.

While Flaherty did give copies of his portraits to his subjects, his primary audience was the social and political elite in the Southern communities, especially his sponsor, Sir William Mackenzie, and potential sponsors such as C. T. Currelly, Sir Edmund Walker, and the Royal Ontario Museum. This was clearly recognized by Frances Flaherty, who, even prior to seeing his 1914 film, wrote in her diary for December 17, 1914:<sup>15</sup>

We hope that they will attract a great deal of attention, be widely shown and gain recognition for R. [Robert] as an explorer, as an artist and interpreter of the Eskimo people, and consequently bring him greater opportunity.

The premiere showing of Flaherty's 1914 film, presented under the auspices of the Royal Ontario Museum and the Archaeological Institute of America at the University of Toronto, was a glittering, prestigious affair which was reviewed in several newspapers as well as in the social columns.

It is interesting to consider the response of the Toronto press to the films and photographs:<sup>16</sup>

The picture of the men, women and children shown were exceptionally strong types, not the low, beetling brow or sulky faces one associates with the Eskimo. Happy, sturdy children were pictured with all the curiosity in the world as they faced the camera.

It is evident that Flaherty had managed to convey a sense of the personal, the individual, in his images of the Inuit, at a time when most photographic and filmic documentation stressed their exotic lifestyle and "other"-ness. Nevertheless, the image which Flaherty portrayed was rooted in notions of the Noble Savage, an image in which the Inuit today still find themselves entrenched.

The new countries of Canada, the United States, and Australia have quite distinct histories in terms of the contact between original peoples and the European settlers. These histories are often distinguished by the degree to which the physical territory occupied by the original peoples was required by the new settlers. In both Australia and Canada large areas of land occupied specifically by the aborigines and the Inuit were often remote, difficult of access, and unsuited to traditional European lifestyles.

In recent years, however, the Australian aborigines, the Canadian Inuit, and large numbers of North American Indians have been struggling for legal control over, and compensation for, land which is rich in raw materials. Perhaps more profoundly, they are struggling to shatter paternalistic images of themselves, rooted in unresolved territorial conflict, which were generated in the beginning of this century to suit the political, cultural, and social needs of that time.

Consideration of the photographs of Robert Flaherty must question their use and exchange value not only for his contemporaries but for ours.

## Figure 19

Cat. No. 48

Copy print, from vintage print, by NPC, on loan from FSCC.  
N 188

5" × 4" / 12.7 × 10.2 cm

subject: portrait of man, probably 1913–1914, Baffin Island.

identification: the subject of this photograph was identified as *Avaleeneatok*\* by Peter Pitseolak, Ashoona, Pudlo, Kudjuarjuk and others.

note: according to Pitseolak (in *People from our side*, p. 88) the moving picture boss [Flaherty] got *Noogooshoweetok*, Joe and *Attachie* as Eskimo guides and helpers. The real worker was Joe's son *Avaleeniatuk*. He was just a young man, *Avaleeniatuk*. He was the adopted son of Joe and Lao (Peter Pitseolak's aunt). Ten years after Flaherty left, according to Pauta and Pitlosie, Cape Dorset, *Avaleeniatuk* and his children starved to death. Eber 1.









**Figure 20**

Cat. No. 38

modern print, from original glass plate, by NPC, on loan from FSCC.

N 207

7" × 5" / 17.8 × 12.7 cm

subject: portrait of woman, probably 1913–1914, Baffin Island.

identification: the subject of this photograph was identified as *Guseevie*\* by Ekidluak (Ikidluak) and Kowjakalook of Lake Harbour. Others disputed this on the basis that the photograph shows no tattoo marks on the face which Guseevie was known to bear. Eber 2.

note: Guseevie was a well known personality on the South Baffin coast. One of Elee's wives, she played the music box and led the dances in what is known as the "second religious time" (about 1908).

*This was the second religious time. When a person was told to do something, he'd do it right away because he'd want to be saved. People danced so much because they had to say yes when they were asked. If they refused, the leaders would think they were not religious like the others. If they danced, they were saved!*

Peter Pitseolak, *People from our side*, pp. 59–60, pp. 66–69.

### The Moral Responsibility of the Photographer to the Subject

One of the most disturbing elements of the research into Flaherty's photographs is the possibility that Robert and/or Frances Flaherty "renamed" the subjects of the Inuit portraits. As can be seen from the photographs reproduced with this article (and described in depth in The Vancouver Art Gallery catalog), it would appear that at least some of the names which Flaherty ascribed to the subjects of his photographs and films were fictional. "Nanook" was probably Allakariallak, "Nyla" was possibly Alice (?) Nuvalinga, "Allegoo" was probably Kanajuq, "Tooktoo" was possibly Anumnuq, "Cunayou" possibly Narlaq, and "Anunglung," the star of the 1914 film, was possibly Noogooshoweetok.<sup>17</sup>

We are familiar with, indeed comfortable with, the process of substitute names in "fictional" films. However, because of the manner in which Nanook had been presented to us, as a "real" person, including notices on his subsequent death, renaming the lead character in *Nanook of the North* does seem questionable, even if understandable. Renaming the subjects of Flaherty's photographs seems to be even more questionable. Two important points should be made. The first is the context in which the subjects were identified; the second is the history of naming and identifying the Inuit in the Canadian Arctic.

There are only three published sources in which Flaherty named his subjects: the learned *Geographical Review*, Vol. VI, No. 2 (including a photograph of Omarolluk which is probably correctly ascribed); the publication *Camera Studies of the Far North* (1922), a collection of photogravures; and *My Eskimo Friends* (1924). The latter two, published with the authorization of the French furriers Revillon Frères (who financed *Nanook of the North*), were obviously related to the promotion of the film. It is implied that the photographs named Allegoo, Cunayou, and Tooktoo were taken during the production of *Nanook* and/or in Revillon Frères trading posts. They were in fact probably taken in 1914 or earlier, in or around Hudson Bay posts on Baffin Island or Great Whale post.

Confusion over Inuit names was a problem which had beset various forms of northern administration (clerical, commercial, and governmental) up until the 1970s. The reasons were many and complex: the absence of a written Inuit language; the changing of names by the addition of suffixes to indicate age and seniority; the adoption of baptismal names of biblical origin with the arrival of Christianity, while sometimes still employing an Inuit name; the absence of surnames (or even addresses!) to distinguish people with the same name. These difficulties were compounded by the tendency of southern visitors to assign a new name for convenience. Flaherty himself referred to his assistants as "Little Tommy," "Harry Lauder," "Jack Johnson." Flaherty also used different spellings for the same name; for example, Noahasweetow and Noasweeto for the person whom Pitseolak identified as Noogooshoweetok.



It is possible that in view of these practices in the North, as well as the desire to provide more archetypal and romantic resonances, Flaherty felt justified in reassigning names to the subjects of his photographs. Nevertheless, such a procedure carries with it serious consequences. As recently as 1968 Professor R. J. Williamson expressed his concern to the Northwest Territories Council regarding the "loss of proper family and cultural identity by the Eskimo . . . because of the very widespread and enormous inaccuracy of the spelling of Eskimo names."<sup>18</sup> During the ensuing discussion, Williamson made the following statement:

The importance of the Eskimo name is something I have spoken of before. It is very important for each individual to be properly identified. In the Eskimo tradition it had an even greater significance, and there is a persistence of the attitude derived from those traditional beliefs, whereby the name is the soul and the soul is the name. So if you misuse someone's name, you not only damage his personal identity in the existing society, but you also damage his immortal soul.<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 21**

Cat. No. 42

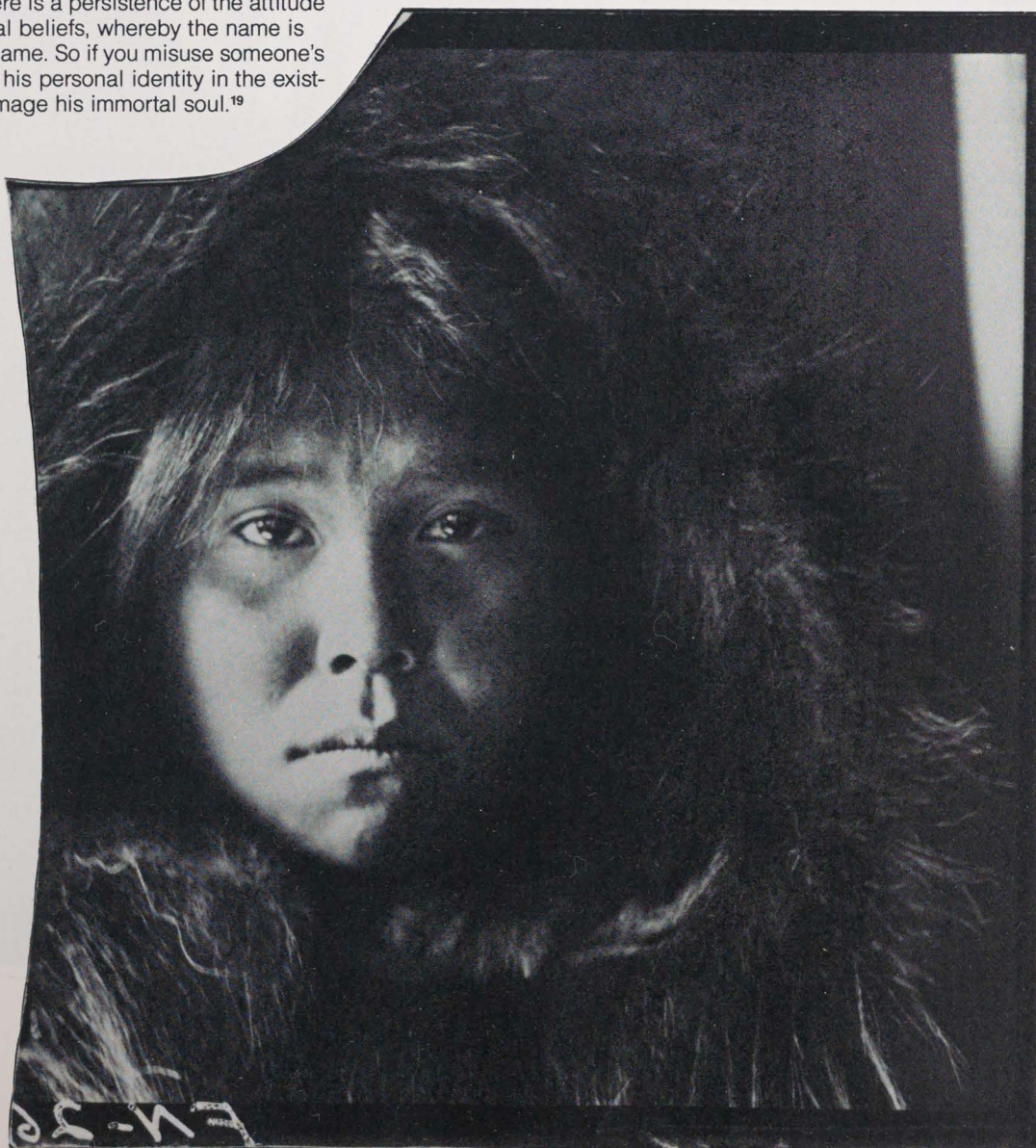
modern print, from  
original glass plate, by  
NPC, on loan from FSCC.

N 2069

4" × 3½" / 10.2 × 8.9 cm

subject: portrait of child  
(female).

note: possibly black-bear  
fur which would suggest  
an area close to the tree  
line. Black bear was not a  
preferred fur because of  
its coarseness which  
suggests a scarcity of  
other furs. (MacDonald).





**Figure 22**

Cat. No. 108

modern print, from  
original glass plate, by  
NPC, on loan from FSCC.

N 2452

7" × 5" / 17.8 × 12.7 cm

subject: photograph of  
two women (one with  
child) with surveying or  
filming equipment,  
probably 1913–1914,  
Baffin Island.

note: hairstyle and dress  
would indicate Baffin  
Island (MacDonald,  
Zimmerly).





**Figure 23**

Cat. No. 105

three modern prints, from original glass slides, by NPC, on loan from FSCC.

N 2132

3¾" × 4¾" / 9.5 × 12.1 cm

N 2135

3¾" × 4¾" / 9.5 × 12.1 cm

N 2128

2½" × 4½" / 6.4 × 11.4 cm

subject: studies of Port Harrison post during winter storm, 1920–1921.

identification: *The Trading Post at Cape Dufferin*. Flaherty 7.

note: probably used as study for film production.

**Figure 24**

Cat. No. 36

modern print, from original glass plate, by NPC, on loan from FSCC.

N 176

7" × 5" / 17.8 × 12.7 cm

subject: portrait of man, 1913–1914, Baffin Island.

identification: the subject of this photograph was identified as *Noogooshoweetok (Nungusuituq)\** by Simeonie Kopapik.note: Noogooshoweetok (Everlasting) was the son of Joe and Lao (Peter Pitseolak's aunt). His adoptive brother was Avaleeneatok, No.48, N 188. According to Peter Pitseolak in *People from our side*, p.88:

*The moving picture boss [Flaherty] got Noogooshoweetok, Joe and Attachie as Eskimo guides and helpers . . . Noogooshoweetok was the one they took pictures of—and he also made pictures for them. Noogooshoweetok was the first one to draw; the picture makers made him draw. I have seen Noogooshoweetok's drawings recently in books. He was my close relative. I remember he told me it was tiring to make drawings.*

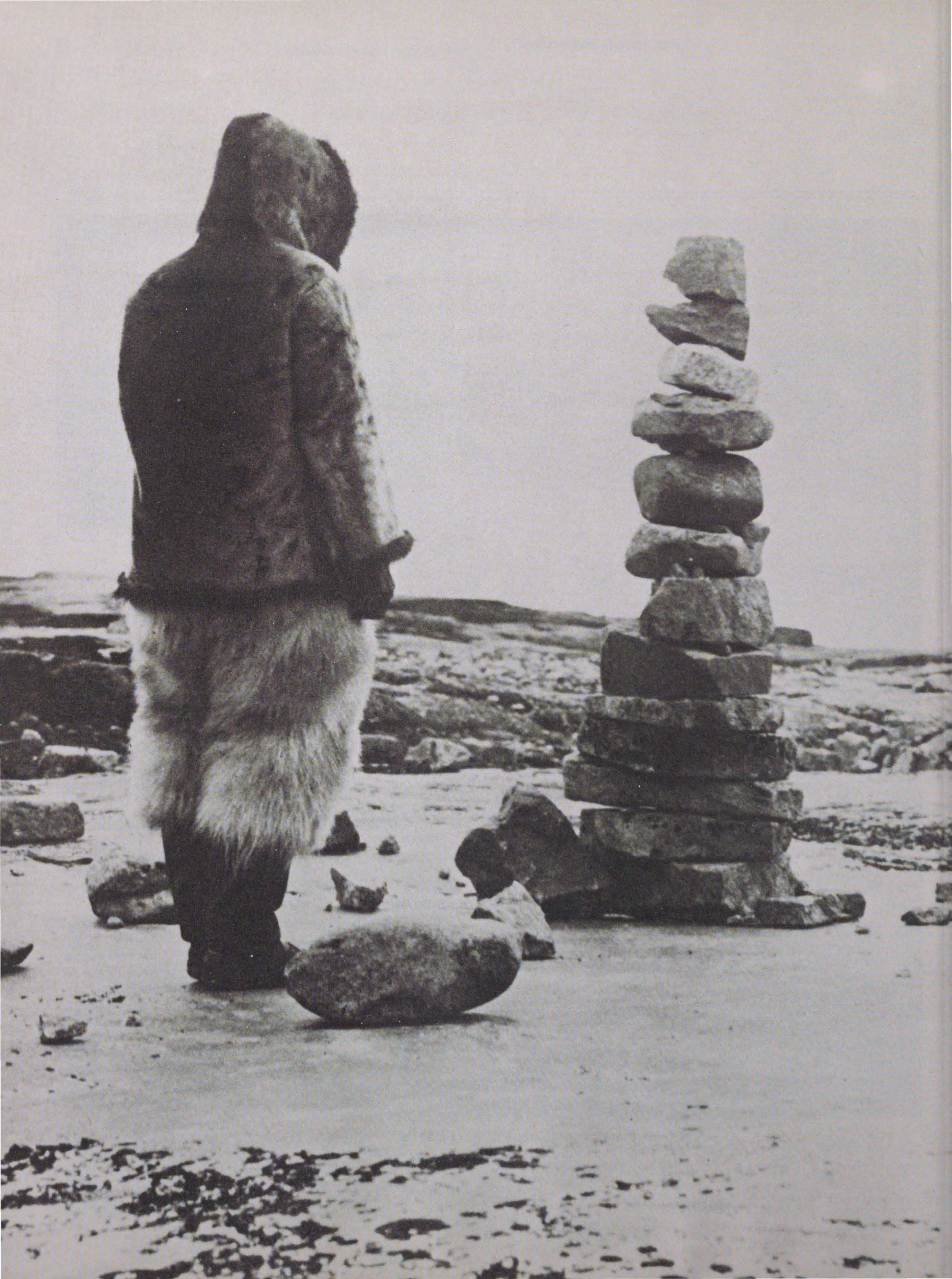
The drawings Pitseolak referred to are included in the exhibition, Nos. 119–139. One of Noogooshoweetok's drawings was used in preparing the script for Flaherty's 1914 film. It is possibly No.135/953.110.1Q—*Esquimaux playing a game*. See *Filmography*.

Flaherty mentions that Noasweeto/Noogooshoweetok captured a live deer for the film (*Early Account of the Film*) as does Simeonie Kopapik. Eber 1. Flaherty wrote that he was married to Luliakame, and had a son Anunglung who was, according to Toronto newspaper reviews, the main subject of the 1914 film. See *Filmography*.

Flaherty described Noasweeto as: *easily first in either sledge driving or hunting amongst the motion picture retainers of the post and more than that he was the eskimo artist par excellence at either drawing or carving on ivory.*









**Figure 25**

Cat. No. 89

modern print, from original glass plate, by NPC, on loan from FSCC.

N 2377

5" × 4" / 12.7 × 10.2 cm

subject: photograph of man (from clothing, most likely Allakariallak/Nanook) standing in front of Inukshuk, Inoucdjouac, 1920–1921.

note: the Inukshuk appears to be especially prepared for the camera (MacDonald, Zimmerly).

Almost all photographs of Allakariallak show him wearing this dress, which includes a seal skin jacket with (probably) dog fur trim, bear skin pants and seal skin boots. While Inuit in Canada did wear seal skin jackets, none wore bear skin pants (which were common to colder Arctic regions such as Greenland). Flaherty himself (who travelled only in Canada) would never have met Inuit wearing bear skin pants (MacDonald).

A number of photographs also show Allakariallak in this dress (clearly winter dress) in spring and summer (e.g. N 289).

These photographs would indicate that Flaherty dressed Allakariallak in bear skin pants, called him Nanook (the bear) and attempted to shoot bear hunting sequences in order to conform to preconceived and popularly held notions of the Inuit.

**The "Objectivity" or "Authenticity" of the Image**

The questionable objectivity which we assign to the mechanically reproduced image has long been debated. It seems, however, that this issue becomes more critical when we consider the documentation of exotic peoples, especially those within our own culture.

Indeed, in this journal, there have been other attempts to consider such issues. One in particular should be mentioned: Joanna Cohan Scherer's "You Can't Believe Your Eyes: Inaccuracies in Photographs of North American Indians" (1975).

With regard to the "authenticity" of Flaherty's photographs, it should be pointed out they fall into three quite distinct categories:

- 1 Documents—documentary-type photographs within the expeditionary tradition
- 2 Inuit portraits
- 3 Photographs taken during the shooting of *Nanook of the North*

*Documents.* While many of these photographs are obviously prepared for the camera, it would appear that manipulation of their content was minimal. The photographs were considered by three sources: John MacDonald, The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Ottawa; Dr. David W. Zimmerly, National Museum of Man, Ottawa; and Dudley Copland. The only apparent inaccuracy was to be found in Exhibition Index No. 63 (N 219) (Burant et al. 1979) and No. 64 (N 217), which shows a woman wearing men's boots.

*Inuit portraits.* The portraits, as described earlier, shifted focus from the exotic to the individual. To the extent that ethnographic detail is largely removed from the frame (and is therefore not manipulated) they can be termed "authentic." It should be pointed out that those photographs showing women wearing Hudson's Bay Company shawls draped around their heads reflect actual practice in the Ungava Peninsula and were not designed by Flaherty for photographic effect.

*Nanook of the North.* It is of significance that the photographs which possibly display ethnographic inaccuracies are contained in this section. The most controversial example of this is the clothing worn by Nanook/Allakariallak, specifically his polar bear pants. It was suggested that Canadian Inuit did not wear polar bear pants, which would imply that Flaherty had brought the clothing from the South or commissioned it in order to conform to preconceived notions of the Inuit (ibid.:57,62). It has recently been suggested by Minnie Freeman that the Belcher Islanders wore polar bear pants,<sup>20</sup> and Dr. David Zimmerly also located a reference in Diamond Jenness which confirms that such clothing was utilized by the Copper Inuit.



The question remains whether the presence of this clothing implies that the participants in *Nanook of the North* were Belcher Islanders or Port Harrison Inuit who themselves wore such clothing or were familiar with it. It would appear, regardless of the identity of the participants, that such clothing was probably not the norm. Another photograph showing Nanook standing in front of an Inukshuk (landmark of stones), Exhibition Index No. 89 (N2377), has also been questioned (ibid.:60,88). While it has been suggested that the Inukshuk looks specially prepared for the camera, this has also been subsequently disputed.

Perhaps the only photographs which are undisputedly ethnographically incorrect show Nyla and Nanook wearing winter dress in spring or summer (evident from the absence of snow on the ground) (ibid.:54,89). As these photographs were obviously taken during the production of the film, such posing or "acting" could be considered functional if not "authentic."

## Postscript

The photographs of Robert Flaherty are presently touring the Ungava Peninsula under the auspices of an Inuit organization, La Fédération des Co-opératives du Nouveau-Québec. During the tour oral histories associated with Flaherty will be collected, and if possible, more information on the photographs will be obtained. Such a tour furthers the goal of repatriating these images for and by the Inuit, whose families shared their lives and collaborated with Robert Flaherty in producing these photographs and the films *1914*, *1916*, and *Nanook of the North*.

## Notes

- 1 A. Barry Roberts, *Eskimo Identification and Disc Numbers: A Brief History*, unpublished paper prepared for the Social Development Division, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Ottawa, June 1975, page 28. Proposal for standardized spelling of Inuit names by F. H. Murphy, Administrator of Ordinances to the Deputy Commissioner, Government of the North West Territories, January 31, 1968.
- 2 "Fellow Citizens 1500 Miles Away," *The Toronto Sunday World*, March 28, 1915. "How I Filmed Nanook of the North," *The World's Work*, September 1922. "Indomitable Children of the North," *Travel*, 39(4), August 1922. "Life among the Eskimos," *The World's Work*, October 1922. "Wetalltook's Islands," *The World's Work*, February 1923. "Winter on Wetalltook's Islands," *The World's Work*, March 1923.
- 3 *Camera Studies of the Far North*, New York, Putnam, 1922. Note: Although Revillon Frères state that the portraits were taken and developed in their trading posts, a number of them were from earlier expeditions.
- 4 Interview with Susan Boyd-Bowman, Thunder Bay, July 23, 1979, for The Vancouver Art Gallery.
- 5 Currently stored with *The Robert J. Flaherty Papers*, Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, Box 16.
- 6 See Danzker 1979:17-20, Chronology, for a full description of the Mackenzie expeditions.
- 7 Currently in the collection of the National Photography Collection, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Reference No. PA 53577.
- 8 Dorothy Harley Eber found a number of photographs in Cape Dorset and Lake Harbour. Ibid.
- 9 Presently located in the Claremont Archives, Thunder Bay Historical Museum, Royal Ontario Museum and National Photography Collection, Public Archives of Canada.
- 10 Frances Flaherty's diary, Sunday, January 3, 1915, in *The Robert J. Flaherty Papers*, Butler Library, Columbia University, Box 22.
- 11 *The Robert J. Flaherty Papers*, Butler Library, Columbia University, Box 22.
- 12 Toronto newspaper clippings, *The Robert J. Flaherty Papers*, Butler Library, Columbia University, Box 16. See also Danzker 1979:63, 64, "Filmography."
- 13 Frances Flaherty's diary, April 9, 1915, *The Robert J. Flaherty Papers*, Butler Library, Columbia University, Box 22.
- 14 Ibid., April 30, 1915.
- 15 *The Robert J. Flaherty Papers*, Butler Library, Columbia University, Box 22.
- 16 Review in *The Mail and Empire*, Thursday, April 1, 1915, in *The Robert J. Flaherty Papers*, Butler Library, Columbia University, Box 16.
- 17 Research into the identification of Flaherty's photographs is in its initial stages, and conflicting evidence is beginning to emerge. In some cases, the same subject has been identified by different sources as a member of different Inuit communities. For example, the man whom Flaherty identified as Tooktoo, from Baffin Island, was identified by Baffin Islanders as Anumiuk, and by Minne Freeman (granddaughter of Wetalltok) as Tooktoo from the Belcher Islands.
- 18 See Note 1: Roberts (1975).
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Interview with the author, Ottawa, March 13, 1980.



## References

- Burant, Jim, Mary Psutka, and Joy Williams  
1979 To Photograph the Arctic Frontier. In Robert Flaherty: Photographer/Filmmaker. Vancouver: The Vancouver Art Gallery.
- Calder-Marshall, Arthur  
1970 The Innocent Eye: The Life of Robert J. Flaherty. Baltimore: Pelican.
- Danzker, Jo-Anne Birnie  
1979 Robert Flaherty: Photographer/Filmmaker: The Inuit 1910-1922. (See Exhibition Index.) Vancouver: The Vancouver Art Gallery.
- Eber, Dorothy Harley  
1979 On Koodjuk's Trail. *Natural History* 88(1).
- Flaherty, Frances  
1960 The Odyssey of a Film-Maker. Urbana, Ill.: Beta Phi Mu.
- Flaherty, Robert J.  
1918 The Belcher Islands of Hudson Bay. *The Geographical Review* V(6).  
1918 Two Traverses across Ungava Peninsula Labrador. *The Geographical Review* VI(2).
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Frances Flaherty  
1924 My Eskimo Friends. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.
- Frassetto, Monica Flaherty  
1979 Introduction to On Koodjuk's Trail. *Natural History* 88(1).
- Griffith, Richard  
1953 The World of Robert Flaherty. New York and Boston: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce.
- Jenness, Diamond  
1922 The Material Culture of the Copper Eskimo. In *Canadian Arctic Expedition 1913-1918* 16(9).
- Murphy, William T.  
1978 Robert Flaherty: A Guide to References and Resources. Boston: G. K. Hall.
- Pitseolak, Peter, and Dorothy Harley Eber  
1975 People from Our Side. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers.
- Scherer, Joanna Cohen  
1975 You Can't Believe Your Eyes: Inaccuracies in Photographs of North American Indians. *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication* 2(2).

## Photographic References from the Exhibition Index

The accession or catalogue number assigned by the lending institution, as well as that assigned by The Robert and Frances Flaherty Study Center, Claremont, California, have been indicated where applicable.

The dimensions of the photographs are expressed in both inches and centimetres: height before width.

The term "vintage" print means that produced by Robert Flaherty, or during his lifetime. The term "modern" print refers to that produced specifically for this exhibition by Jose Byloos, Senior Photographer at the National Photography Collection, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa from the original glass plates, slides and nitrate negatives in the collection of The Robert and Frances Flaherty Study Center, Claremont, California.

In the case of a small number of photographs for which no negative survived, copy prints were made from the vintage print. This has been indicated in the catalogue entry.

Identifications of the photographs have been included where possible. Published captions or hand inscriptions by Robert and Frances Flaherty have been placed first, followed by other sources in alphabetical order. The order of these identifications does not indicate either preference or probability.

A number of photographs in the Flaherty collection showing sledges or clothing utilized only in Greenland (which Flaherty never visited) could not have been taken by him and therefore have not been included in the exhibition (N2438, N2538, N2743). Photographs of Allakariallak (Nanook) showing him wearing Greenland clothing have been included as these were obviously taken during the filming of *Nanook of the North*.

Two other photographs in the collection of Christopher Chapman, Toronto, attributed to Flaherty, were identified as those of A.P. Low and V. Stefansson. The presence of these and the Greenland photographs would suggest that Flaherty collected as well as took photographs.

### Photographic Archives

#### FSCC

Robert and Frances Flaherty Study Center, School of Theology, Claremont, California.

#### NPC

National Photography Collection, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

#### NPA/M

Notman Photographic Archives, McCord Museum, McGill University, Montreal.

#### ROM

Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

#### TBHM

Thunder Bay Historical Museum.

### Sources for Identifications of, and Captions for, the Photographs

#### Flaherty 1

Handwritten inscriptions by Robert Flaherty.

#### Flaherty 2

Captions for recommendation for Bell & Howell Camera by Robert Flaherty. "The Sir William Mackenzie Expeditions to Hudson's Bay, Toronto, Canada", March 24, 1915. Probably provided by Robert Flaherty.

#### Flaherty 3

Captions for "Fellow Citizens 1500 Miles Away", *Toronto Sunday World*, March 28, 1915. Probably provided by newspaper rather than Flaherty.

#### Flaherty 4

Captions for "The Belcher Islands of Hudson Bay: Their Discovery and Exploration". *Geographical Review*, Vol. V, No. 6, pp. 433-458. 1918. Probably provided by Robert Flaherty.

#### Flaherty 5

Captions for "Two Traverses Across Ungava Peninsula, Labrador". *Geographical Review*, Vol. VI, No. 2, pp. 116-132. 1918. Probably provided by Robert Flaherty.

#### Flaherty 6

Captions for "Indomitable Children of the North". *Travel*, Vol. 39, No. 4, pp. 16-20. August, 1922. Probably provided by Robert and Frances Flaherty.

#### Flaherty 7

Captions for "How I Filmed Nanook of the North". *The World's Work*, pp. 553-560. September, 1922. Probably provided by Robert and Frances Flaherty.

#### Flaherty 8

Captions for "Life Among the Eskimos". *The World's Work*, pp. 632-640. October, 1922. Probably provided by Robert and Frances Flaherty.

#### Flaherty 9

Captions for photogravures published in *Camera Studies of the Far North*. New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons. 1922. Probably provided by Robert and Frances Flaherty.



**Figure 26**

Cat. No. 109

modern print, from original nitrate negative, by NPC, on loan from FSCC.

N 379

5" × 4½" / 12.7 × 11.4 cm

subject: photograph of man with tripod, possibly 1913–1914, Baffin Island or 1915–1916, Belcher Islands.

**Flaherty 10**

Captions for "Wetalltok's Islands". *The World's Work*, pp. 422-433. February, 1923. Probably provided by Robert and Frances Flaherty.

**Flaherty 11**

Captions for "Winter on Wetalltok's Islands". *The World's Work*, pp. 538-553. March, 1923. Probably provided by Robert and Frances Flaherty.

**Flaherty 12**

Captions for *My Eskimo Friends*, Robert and Frances Flaherty. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Co. 1924. Probably provided by Robert and Frances Flaherty.

**Flaherty 13**

Captions for "In Baffin Land" by Alan Sullivan. It is unlikely that these captions are correct.

**Frances Flaherty**

Handwritten inscriptions by Frances Flaherty on photographs stored at The Robert and Frances Flaherty Study Center, Claremont, California.

**Ruttan**

Identifications supplied by Frances Ruttan (nee Flaherty), Robert Flaherty's sister, to Thunder Bay Historical Museum, 1979.

**Eber 1**

Identifications supplied from various sources through interviews conducted by Dorothy Harley Eber in Cape Dorset and Lake Harbour, Baffin Island. Published in "On Koodjuk's Trail", *Natural History*, Vol. 88, No. 1, January, 1979.

**Eber 2**

Identifications supplied by Dorothy Harley Eber in letters to the editor, dated July 15 and August 4, 1979.

**NPA/M**

Notman Photographic Archives, identifications made by Peter Pitseolak and Simeonie Kopapik.

**MacDonald**

Information supplied by John MacDonald, Head, Cultural and Linguistics Section, The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Ottawa.

**Zimmerly**

Information supplied by Dr. David W. Zimmerly, Arctic Ethnologist, The National Museum of Man, Ottawa.

**Copland**

Information supplied by Dudley Copland, Ottawa.

**Hodgson**

Information supplied in a letter from S. M. Hodgson, former Commissioner of the North West Territories to Dudley Copland, dated April 24, 1978.

**Editor's note:**

\*Identification of the subjects of these photographs with descendants in Baffin Island has proved difficult, because of strong family resemblances and the passage of time. Although many of the identifications are difficult to verify, they have been included to assist in further research.